



THE NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING

Vol 1. No. 19

EXPLORE THE WONDERS OF NATURE - VOLUNTEER

Spring 2004

DID YOU KNOW ...

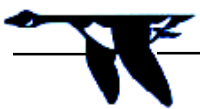
A new arrival has been spotted at the Forsythe NWR, Brigantine Division. Born June 22, 2003 in Kazakhstan, the bouncing youngster, Anna Mary Long migrated across the Atlantic Ocean in December, and has now settled into her new habitat with Mommy Deb Long (a/k/a Forsythe's Deputy Project Leader) and her over-protective Labrador Retriever "sibling," Cassie.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is located in Central Asia - below Russia and northwest of China.

We think you'll agree that this sweet little girl is a wonderful addition to our Forsythe family (*don't you just want to kiss those cheeks?*)



a new species? - Anja Tigr (Anna Tiger)



AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGES

Wild Things

*where wildlife
comes naturally!*

The Wildlife Drive -- Then & Now

Encouraged by the prospering seashore resort industry toward the end of the Nineteenth Century, a railroad was built from Oceanville to Brigantine. This included 3.10 miles of track over the salt marsh and a 9,050 foot trestle including a drawbridge at each end. It was called the Brigantine Beach Railroad, and there was a station at the corner of what is now known as Great Creek Road and US Route 9. The corner still retains the name of Oceanville Station. The train was never profitable, and when a storm in 1903 destroyed 2,000 feet of trestle, it was not replaced. The old railroad bed became the south dike and is the beginning leg that thousands of Forsythe visitors travel when they drive the eight-mile Wildlife Drive at the refuge.



As development sprang up in the area during the 1920s and 30s, deep lagoons were constructed which were too deep for shorebirds. In 1939, the Brigantine Division of the refuge was established and additional dikes were built to protect tidal wetland and shallow bay habitat for migratory birds. Now the dikes enclose 1,415 acres of three impoundments holding fresh and brackish water in a tidal salt marsh. The system of dikes and the three impoundments can be seen from either of the two observation towers on the drive. Water levels in the impoundments are managed to enhance the resources on which wildlife depend. Shorebirds prefer lower water levels, and in spring the water is lowered to attract them. The lower levels allow millet seed to get air and germinate so that ducks can feed on the millet in the fall. Because waterfowl like higher levels of water to swim on, the water is raised then.

More than eighty percent of Forsythe is tidal salt meadow and marsh, interspersed with shallow coves and bays, important feeding habitats, as abundant marsh plants provide food and cover for water birds and other wildlife. The quiet tidal waters provide food as well as spawning grounds and nurseries for fish and shellfish that are important in the diets of many wildlife species.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE ...

Did You Know?	1
Wildlife Drive, Then & Now	1
View From the Tower - News About Forsythe Refuge's Landbirds	2
Make Your Backyard Bird Friendly	3
Bald Eagle Status in New Jersey	3
Migration	4
Calling All Artists	4
A Perfect Score	4
The "Scope's" on John Matteoni	5
2004 NWRS Awards	5
Congratulations to Dave Rhodes	5
Volunteer Opportunities	5
Tax Deductions for Volunteers	6
Refuge System News - A Look Back on Our Centennial Year	7
Two New Refuges	7
Walmart Contributes \$500.00 for Refuge Projects	7
Upcoming Events	7
Volunteer Interpreters & Environmental Educators Needed	8
Who's On Staff?	8



News About Forsythe Refuge's Landbirds

by Jorge Coppen

Last July, we received the Region 5 NWRS Biological Database from Hal Laskowski., Regional Refuge Biologist.

Table 1 summarizes abundance and rank for the 12 most abundant Neotropical Migratory Bird species at Forsythe NWR, according to data from the point count surveys conducted at the refuge over the past few years.

Table 2 summarizes priority Neotropical Migratory Bird species within our "Physiographic Area 44", a Partners in Flight designation, and their rank as well as special breeding habitat requirements. This information can be used in decision-making and to prioritize upland habitat management on the refuge. It appears that a good mix of deciduous & mixed (e.g., oak-pine) open woodlands with brushy edges and adjacent shrubby oldfield habitats may provide the best vegetative community composition and structure to meet habitat patch requirements for the top priority species.



Table 1. Point count species abundance and rank for the top 12 NTMB species observed at Forsythe NWR, 1997-2001

SPECIES	Mean Abundance (1997-2001)	RANK
Gray Catbird	96.5	1
Common Grackle	69.75	2
Red-winged Blackbird	69	3
Common Yellowthroat	51.5	4
Ovenbird	47	5
Tufted Titmouse	42.75	6
Great-crested Flycatcher	38.5	7
American Robin	38	8
Eastern Towhee	37.5	9
Blue Jay	30.75	10
Fish Crow	30.25	11
American Goldfinch	27	12

Table 2. Priority NTMB species, their rank, and special breeding habitat requirements for the top 10 species

SPECIES	RANK	SPECIAL HABITAT REQUIREMENTS
Gray Catbird	1	Dense shrubby woodland edges, abandoned fields
Eastern Towhee	2	Dense brushy fields and pastures, woodland edges
Carolina Chickadee	3	Open deciduous woodlands & edges
Field Sparrow	4	Old fields, overgrown pastures
Eastern Wood-Pewee	5	Open deciduous & mixed forest or forest edges
Brown Thrasher	6	Deciduous forest edge, brush and shrub
White-eyed Vireo	7	Brushy woodland edges, open woodlands
Chimney Swift	8	Open woodlands
Scarlet Tanager	9	Mature deciduous & mixed woodlands
Blue-winged Warbler	10	Woodland edge near water, brushy open areas, oldfield & pastures
Kentucky Warbler	11	Shrubby woodland borders with dense understory

Literature Cited:

- DeGraff, R.M. and J.H. Rappole. 1995. Neotropical migratory birds: Natural history, distribution, and population change. Cornell University Press. Ithaca, NY. 676pp.
- Ehrlich, P.R., D.S. Dobkin and D. Wheye. 1988. The Birder's Handbook: A field guide to the natural history of North American birds. Simon & Schuster, Inc. New York, NY. 785pp.

MAKE YOUR BACKYARD BIRD FRIENDLY

Audubon At Home launches website program to create healthy habitats

You know where you live, but do you know your "ecological address?" Audubon At Home, a new program made possible in part by the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is bringing conservation home through an exciting, interactive website designed to give guests useful information on making their backyards more bird-friendly, and their homes healthier and safer for their families. It accomplishes this by helping users identify the natural characteristics of their property and its role in local ecology.

As the centerpiece of this year's Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>, Audubon is stressing the value of backyard habitat and asks participants to make their yards not only bird-friendly, but also bird-safe. The new Audubon At Home website, http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/index.html, contains a treasure trove of information that gives users the tools they need to create backyards that will attract birds and safeguard them as well.

"Each yard, no matter the size, has the potential to help birds," said Sally Conyne, Director of the GBBC. "By providing just a few necessities, your home landscape will attract birds, beneficial insects, and other wildlife. You'll be rewarded with a low-maintenance yard bustling with the variety of colors and textures you would find in far wilder places."

Historically, conservation efforts have focused on open space and wilderness tracts. Fragmented by development and industry, natural lands, especially those near metropolitan areas, are dwindling even as you read the words on this page. In the United States suburban sprawl increases by more than 2 million acres every year.

Audubon At Home is an innovative program designed to mitigate some of the problems created in suburban areas. Birds and other wildlife don't recognize property lines and travel into yards where food and shelter are provided. What individuals do in their own yards can make a difference in the lives of birds; the healthier American yards are, the better for the health of the environment.

John Bianchi, Audubon Society

Bald Eagle Status in New Jersey

The NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife has completed their New Jersey Bald Eagle Management Project Report for 2003. The Division's Endangered and Nongame Species Program's (ENSP) biologists and volunteers have worked for over 20 years to help the Bald Eagle recover from near extinction. The following is excerpted from the report.

The population of wintering bald eagles has grown along with the nesting population, especially in the last ten years. This growth reflects increasing nesting populations in New Jersey and the northeast, as each state's recovery effort pays off. In recognition of this success, the federal government upgraded the status of the Bald Eagle from endangered to threatened in July of 1995, and in 2003 proposed federal de-listing of the species. The federal status remains threatened; however, the eagle remains endangered in New Jersey, and regulatory protection remains the same.

The following is a summary of the status of NJ's Bald Eagles in 2003.

1. There were 40 "Territorial Pairs," defined by "the presence of two potentially breeding birds within suitable nesting habitat during the breeding season where some sign of pair bonding or nesting is evident."
2. There were 35 "Active Pairs," defined as "one that lays eggs or shows incubating behavior."
3. There were 25 "Successful Pairs," defined as "one which produces one or more young that reach fledging age."
4. There were 41 Bald Eagles fledged in the wild in New Jersey in 2003, which the state gives a production rate of 1.17.

Included in this report was a table of Wintering Bald Eagle counts in New Jersey from 1978 to 2003. Both immature birds and adults are counted in these winter counts, and the following is a table for the last three years.

Year	2002	2003	2004
Immature	66	73	60
Adults	99	76	110
Total	165	149	170

Note: 2004 had the second highest count for the study period, exceeded only in 1997.



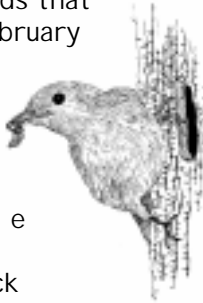
Bird migration refers to the regular seasonal movement of certain species of birds. It is an observable phenomenon for those willing to see it, and is almost always evocative when witnessed. The very existence of migration drives scientists to study it as surely as it inspires artists to render it and poets to capture its essence in words. Nearly all North American birds migrate between their breeding areas and their wintering areas. New Jersey is in the heart of the Atlantic Flyway, one of the four major migratory pathways in North America. This makes it one of the most important states for migrating birds.

Each species has its own special requirements for food and time for breeding, hence they migrate at different times. The major catalyst for bird migration is the seasonal change in the amount of daylight. In spring, lengthening days trigger hormonal changes in birds that prompt northward migration. In autumn, decreasing daylight effects similar changes that prompt southward migration. The benefits of migrating include increased availability of food and of nesting territories as well as escape from extremes of climates.

Be on the watch for the following birds that migrate through New Jersey from late February through mid-April - a sure sign that warm weather will soon be here.

Common grackle
Turkey vulture
Red-winged blackbird
Eastern bluebird
Yellow-shafted flicker
Red-tailed hawk
Saw-whet owl
Ring-necked duck

P i n e
warbler
Ruddy duck
American robin
Killdeer
Eastern phoebe
Northern harrier
Northern pintail



Volunteers Al Richenbach and Rich Koterba attended a chainsaw safety class at the Refuge.



The Division of External Affairs in the Regional Office would like to invite all Region 5 Employees, interns and volunteers to submit artwork to be presented in the Regional Office Gallery. Artwork can be anything from paintings and photography to carvings, sculpture and textile art.

Here are the details:

When: July and August 2004 (This will coincide with the Regional Awards Ceremony)

Where: Regional Office Gallery, Hadley, MA

What: Original artwork by Region 5 Fish and Wildlife Employees, Interns or Volunteers. All hanging items must be able to hang from a hook.

Why: We are proud of the multi-talents of our employees, interns and volunteers and want to share this with others.

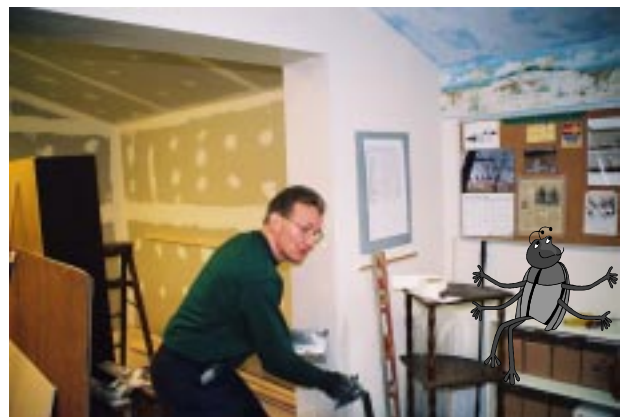


If you plan on submitting your work, please let Sandy Perchetti know by March 25, 2004. Items must be received in the Regional Office no later than June 15, 2004. If you have any questions please email or call Sandy (sandy_perchetti@fws.gov, 609-748-1535).



A PERFECT SCORE

Forsythe volunteer and Four Seasons neighbor Jim Cavalla would rather be golfing, but the cold weather kept Jim off the course - and lucky for us! Jim gladly offered his talents working on the Friends Nature Store addition. Thanks Jim - you score a hole-in-one with us!



JOHN
MATTEONI

Truly one of Forsythe Refuge's "unsung heroes," John has been volunteering at Forsythe Refuge since 1989. Although you'll find John tucked away in the back of the headquarters scanning the never-ending library of refuge slides, you're sure to see him at a variety of places throughout the week. When he can tear himself away from the very important, but grueling job as master slide scanner, John spreads his talents around elsewhere on the refuge.

He has been helping in a variety of ways since he first worked with long-time volunteer John Williamson and the Boy Scouts on the Aker's Trail project. Soon after that project, many realized that John's special talent was photography. He can always be counted on to provide wonderful photos of the wildlife and habitat at the refuge. John has received numerous awards for his photography, including first place in the Friends of Forsythe's photo contest. In addition to being this year's vice president of our Stay Focused Photo Club, John still finds time to be a member of the Friends of Forsythe, Atlantic Audubon Society, and the Wildlife Garden Volunteers. Away from the refuge, John is also a member of the Camera Club of Atlantic City.

John has been married for over fifty years to Nancy, has a daughter Patricia and two granddaughters, Andrea and Amanda. Thanks John for sharing your talent and your time with us. And thanks to John's family for sharing him with us.

2004 National Wildlife Refuge System Awards

Selections have been made for the 2004 National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) awards for Volunteer and Friends Group of the year. These awards are sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). This year's winners were:

Volunteer of the year: Ken and Darlene Fiske
Friends Group of the year: Chincoteague Natural History Association

We congratulate the winners and are extremely proud of members of the Forsythe team - both Ed Bristow and Sue Tebbs who were nominated for their outstanding contributions to the NWRS in support of the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR. Sue and Ed have earned the respect of their colleagues and associates and the gratitude of those who support the goals and objectives of the Refuge System.

You are both winners in our hearts !!



CONGRATULATIONS to Dave Rhodes for being named Carver of the Year by the New Jersey Decoy Collector's Association. Dave has been a Refuge volunteer for over ten years and is on the Friends of Forsythe Board of Directors. You'll soon be able to see more of Dave's work, as he has offered to paint a mural on the exterior of the new addition to the Friends Nature Store.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES - Bring a Friend

Wildflower Garden ____

Environmental Education ____

Count Entrance Fees ____

Visitor Center Talks ____

Trail Maintenance ____

Special Events ____

Photo Club ____

Friends of Forsythe ____

Clean Up Litter

Puppeteers ____ Help with census of plant or animal populations ____ Lead bus tours on Wildlife Drive

____ If you're interested in volunteering for any of these projects, have other ideas, or would like to contribute goods or services to help with these projects, please let us know by completing this form and sending it to us:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Edwin B. Forsythe NWR
 Box 72, Great Creek Road
 Oceanville, NJ 08231
 609-748-1535

Can an attorney who provides free legal assistance to a local housing organization deduct the estimated value of that service on taxes? Can a doctor who volunteers at a free clinic claim a charitable deduction for the estimated value of the service rendered to the clinic? The answer to these questions is "No." Volunteers may NOT deduct the value of their volunteer time or services.

However, there are a number of tax benefits available to volunteers. In preparing tax returns, volunteers may deduct out-of-pocket expenses directly related to their volunteer service if they itemize deductions. Volunteer service or other charitable donations must have been contributed to what the Internal Revenue Service terms a "qualifying organization." This includes government agencies and organizations operated only for charitable, religious, educational, scientific, or literary purposes. A general rule is that when deducting volunteer related expenses, organizations or companies operating "for-profit" do NOT qualify.

Examples of the types of expenditures that volunteers may deduct on their tax returns include

- Bus, cab, and other transportation expenses
- Parking costs and toll fees
- The cost and expense of upkeep of special uniforms
- Telephone bills for volunteer related calling
- Supplies purchased to perform volunteer duties
- Automobile mileage and expenses for gas and oil
- Dues, fees, or assessments made to a qualified organization; a deduction can only be taken for the price over and above the fair market value
- Non-cash contributions of non-appreciable property
- As a chosen representative for a qualified organization, you can deduct actual expenses for travel and transportation, which have not been reimbursed by your employer.



Volunteers may deduct automobile expenses at a standard rate of 14 cents per mile or on actual expenses. They may NOT deduct general automobile repair and maintenance expenses. Good record keeping for transportation-related costs is a must for volunteers who intend to claim automobile-related deductions. A charitable deduction is denied for travel expenses (including for meals and lodging) while away from home, whether paid directly or by reimbursement, unless there is no significant element of personal pleasure, recreation or vacation in the travel. In addition, it must have been necessary for overnight stay while volunteering.

The "out-of-pocket" requirement eliminates a deduction of any amount that is to be the direct benefit of the taxpayer (or taxpayer's family) rather than to the organization. Items for which a volunteer receives reimbursement may be deducted only to the extent that actual expense exceeds the amount of the reimbursement.

The following guidelines should be followed when claiming charitable deductions on tax returns:

- Cash contributions must be an amount actually paid during the taxable year, not just as a pledge
- Contributions must be made to a qualifying organization
- Out-of-pocket expenses which have not been reimbursed
- The volunteer must maintain records which include the name of the organization contributed to and details about each contribution

For contributions over \$250, the contributor should obtain an acknowledgment letter from the receiving organization. It should be a written letter describing the gift, the amount, benefit to recipient and any exchange for gift.

More detailed information can be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service by calling the IRS' Information and Assistance line at (800) 829-1040. Publication #526 "Charitable Contributions" which details the above information can be obtained from the IRS Forms Office at (800) 829-3676.

Source: Points of Light Foundation, Washington DC

INTERNS PLEASE NOTE: You will not receive a W2 Form for wages earned during your internship this past year; however, the IRS says you are still responsible to report that income as wages.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM NEWS

A Look Back on our Centennial Year

The hundreds of Centennial events that began in March and continue even today introduced huge numbers of people to a system that we once thought was "America's best kept secret." Well, the secret is out.

Refuges saw about 40 million visits last fiscal year, 10 percent more than a year earlier. Those visits had a huge national payback: creation of nearly 19,000 jobs and a total of \$1.12 billion in sales revenue and employment income. Remember that last number, because it is more than three times the \$388 million budgeted for our operations and maintenance this fiscal year. As the Federal budget gets tighter in coming years, such numbers will become ever more important.

So will public support for the Refuge System. As people learn about refuges' unparalleled opportunities to enjoy wildlife-dependent recreation, they will ask for the support we need to enhance the resources that we so passionately treasure.

Each day, you are the embodiment of the Refuge System, and its very best advertisement. Whether by wearing the uniform, driving a white vehicle with the Service Shield, or using our standard signs and brochures that boast our brand and logo, each of you plays an essential role in augmenting public understanding of our "wildlife first" mission.

Two New Refuges

Although there was no increase in acreage, the Refuge System gained two new units - one honoring Theodore Roosevelt and the other hailing a legendary African American guide. The new refuges - bringing to 544 the number of refuges within the system - became official when President Bush signed the 2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act January 23. Both were created from former Farmers Home Administration lands, transferred to the USFWS years ago. The Theodore Roosevelt Refuge (MS) spans 6,600 acres of land in Leflore, Holmes, Humphreys Sharkey, Warren and Washington counties. The act also renamed the Central Mississippi Refuge Complex to the Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which encompasses the existing Yazoo, Panther Swamp, Hillside, Morgan Brake and Mathews Brake refuges as well as the two new ones. The other new refuge, Holt Collier, was established from an existing unit of the Yazoo Refuge and spans 1,449 acres. It was named for the famous guide who led Roosevelt to the black bear he refused to shoot in 1902.

WALMART CONTRIBUTES \$500.00 FOR REFUGE PROJECTS

Page 7



For the third year in a row, Walmart (Mays Landing store) has donated \$500.00 to the Friends of Forsythe for support of Forsythe NWR. Over the years, they have contributed to the purchase of Atlantic White Cedar trees for a resortation project for Earth Day, and plants for our native wildlife garden. Pictured above, Walmart Assistant Manager Victor Charman presents a \$500 check to Friends Vice- President Ed Jones.

Volunteers work to make a difference in our wildlife garden thanks to a donation from Walmart, Mays Landing store.



UPCOMING EVENTS

March 20th - Friends Nature Store reopens with a bigger and better building and some great new items.

Stay Focused Photo Club meets the second Saturday of each month at 10 am in the Refuge auditorium.

Spring is here! - help with our wildlife and native plant garden. Group meets Thursdays at 10 am at Refuge headquarters.

Earth Day celebration - April 17th. Tree planting at Jen's trail. Meet at Refuge auditorium at 9:30 am. Call Tracie for more info and to sign up (609-652-1665).

Kids Fishing Derby - June 12th at Patriot Lake (Galloway Township). Call Sandy for more information (609-748-1535).

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Art Webster, our new Chief of Visitor Services is seeking Volunteer Interpreters and Environmental Educators. He would like to have regularly scheduled programs on the weekends and during the weekdays during spring break. In addition, he would like volunteers that he can call on to help provide different activities for large school groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other special request programs.

If you or anyone you know is interested in leading activities, have them contact Sandy for a volunteer application. If you already have an application on file and would like to participate, contact Art.

Once we have a group of volunteers we will provide training and start developing monthly schedules of activities.

Contact Sandy at 609-748-1535; fax: 609-748-2731; email: sandy_perchetti@fws.gov. Contact Art at (609) 652-1665 ext 27; fax (609) 652-1665; email arthur_webster@fws.gov.

WHO'S ON STAFF?

Project Leader
STEVE ATZERT

Deputy Project Leader
DEBORAH LONG

Refuge Manager
Barnegat Division
VACANT

Chief of Visitor Services
ART WEBSTER

Biologists
JORGE COPPEN, VINNY TURNER

Refuge Law Enforcement Officers
BRIAN WILLARD, CHRIS PANCILA

Administrative Officer	Office Automation Assis- tant
MARTHA HAND	CINDY HEFFLEY

Volunteer Coordinator
SANDY PERCHETTI

Maintenance Professionals
TOM HOLDSWORTH
TERRY MITCHELL



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